

TRIBUTE TO STEVE NEAL

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, last week all of Chicago and all of those who read the Chicago Sun Times were shocked at the death of Steve Neal.

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Steve Neal was one of the premier political columnists in the country. I was particularly shocked because I was scheduled to have lunch with Steve on Friday of last week. Steve Neal was one of the premier writers about politics and political action in the Nation. All of us are going to miss him, so I express my condolences to his family, his wife and children and say that all of our lives have been enriched by the opportunity to read the writings of Steve Neal.

ISRAEL SECURITY FENCE
RESOLUTION

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, today there will be much focus across our country on a motion picture known as "The Passion of the Christ," and like millions of Christians, I cherish the sacrifice of Christ and welcome its remembrance. Also, like millions of Christians, I cherish Israel, as a Jewish State and as our staunchest ally in the Middle East.

After traveling to Israel last month and witnessing firsthand daily terrorist-attempted incursions into Israel to kill Israeli civilians, I realized in my heart that America must stand by Israel and by her efforts to protect her people in the construction of a security fence today.

In that spirit, joined by the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) and a growing list of cosponsors, today I will introduce bipartisan legislation that expresses congressional support for Israel to construct a security fence in order to reduce terrorist attacks. Further, the resolution will condemn the United Nations General Assembly for requesting the International Court of Justice to render a legal opinion on the issue of the fence.

Like millions of Christians, I cherish Christ, and I cherish Israel and our relationship with her.

TIME TO ENACT NEW POLICIES
FOR JOB CREATION IN U.S.

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the jobless recovery. What an oxymoron that is.

Families in my district and around the Nation want to know, where are

the jobs? Only 296,000 jobs have been created since this President took office, well below the 2 million that he promised. These jobs, by the way, are being created and going overseas. That is what is really happening here in the U.S.

My district is hurting. I represent East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley. Our unemployment is well over 10 percent. Hundreds of people continue to look for work.

When we talk about homeland security, we should also be talking about job security. It is time to enact policies that will truly stimulate the economy and create jobs at home. We should provide tax cuts for middle class families, tax incentives to keep jobs here in the U.S., and implement fair-trade agreements that respect and level the playing field.

GAO HUMAN CAPITAL REFORM
ACT OF 2003

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House of February 24, 2004, I call up the bill (H.R. 2751) to provide new human capital flexibilities with respect to the GAO, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Pursuant to the order of the House of February 24, 2004, the bill is considered read for amendment.

The text of H.R. 2751 is as follows:

H.R. 2751

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; AMENDMENT OF TITLE 31.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "GAO Human Capital Reform Act of 2003".

(b) AMENDMENT OF TITLE 31.—Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment is expressed in terms of an amendment to a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO PUBLIC LAW 106-303.

Sections 1 and 2 of Public Law 106-303 (5 U.S.C. 8336 note and 5597 note) are amended by striking "for purposes of the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on December 31, 2003" each place it appears and inserting "October 13, 2000".

SEC. 3. ANNUAL PAY ADJUSTMENTS.

(a) OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES GENERALLY.—Paragraph (3) of section 732(c) is amended to read as follows:

"(3) except as provided under section 733(a)(3)(B) of this title, basic pay rates of officers and employees of the Office shall be adjusted annually to such extent as the Comptroller General shall determine, taking into consideration—

"(A) the principle that there be equal pay for substantially equal work within each local pay area;

"(B) the Consumer Price Index;

"(C) any existing pay disparities between officers and employees of the Office and non-Federal employees in each local pay area;

"(D) the pay rates for the same levels of work for officers and employees of the Office

and non-Federal employees in each local pay area;

"(E) the appropriate distribution of agency funds between annual adjustments under this section and performance-based compensation; and

"(F) such other criteria as the Comptroller General considers appropriate, including, but not limited to, the funding level for the Office, amounts allocated for performance-based compensation, and the extent to which the Office is succeeding in fulfilling its mission and accomplishing its strategic plan;

notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, an adjustment under this paragraph shall not be applied in the case of any officer or employee whose performance is not at a satisfactory level, as determined by the Comptroller General for purposes of such adjustment."

(b) OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES IN THE OFFICE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE.—Subparagraph (B) of section 733(a)(3) is amended to read as follows:

"(B) adjusted annually by the Comptroller General after taking into consideration the factors listed under section 732(c)(3) of this title, except that an adjustment under this subparagraph shall not be applied in the case of any officer or employee whose performance is not at a satisfactory level, as determined by the Comptroller General for purposes of such adjustment;"

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 732(b)(6) is amended by striking "title 5." and inserting "title 5, except as provided under subsection (c)(3) of this section and section 733(a)(3)(B) of this title."

SEC. 4. PAY RETENTION.

Paragraph (5) of section 732(c) is amended to read as follows:

"(5) the Comptroller General shall prescribe regulations under which an officer or employee of the Office shall be entitled to pay retention if, as a result of any reduction-in-force or other workforce adjustment procedure, position reclassification, or other appropriate circumstances as determined by the Comptroller General, such officer or employee is placed in or holds a position in a lower grade or band with a maximum rate of basic pay that is less than the rate of basic pay payable to the officer or employee immediately before the reduction in grade or band; such regulations—

"(A) shall provide that the officer or employee shall be entitled to continue receiving the rate of basic pay that was payable to the officer or employee immediately before the reduction in grade or band until such time as the retained rate becomes less than the maximum rate for the grade or band of the position held by such officer or employee; and

"(B) shall include provisions relating to the minimum period of time for which an officer or employee must have served or for which the position must have been classified at the higher grade or band in order for pay retention to apply, the events that terminate the right to pay retention (apart from the one described in subparagraph (A)), and exclusions based on the nature of an appointment; in prescribing regulations under this subparagraph, the Comptroller General shall be guided by the provisions of sections 5362 and 5363 of title 5."

SEC. 5. RELOCATION BENEFITS.

Section 731 is amended by adding after subsection (e) the following:

"(f) The Comptroller General shall prescribe regulations under which officers and employees of the Office may, in appropriate circumstances, be reimbursed for any relocation expenses under subchapter II of chapter 57 of title 5 for which they would not otherwise be eligible, but only if the Comptroller General determines that the transfer giving